WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1.   A method for converting multimedia information comprising the steps of:

requesting multimedia information from a converter;

5   receiving the multimedia information along with conversion hints;

converting the multimedia information in accordance with the conversion hints; and

providing the multimedia information to the requestor.

2.   The method of claim 1, wherein the converter is a transcoder and
10   the converter hints are transcoding hints.

3.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

storing user preferences, wherein the multimedia information is converted to a multimedia format in accordance with the user preferences using the conversion hints.

15   4.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:

storing client capabilities, wherein the multimedia information is converted to a multimedia format in accordance with the client capabilities using the conversion hints.

5.   The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of:
20   storing network or link capabilities, wherein the multimedia information is converted to a multimedia format in accordance with the network or link capabilities using the conversion hints.

6.   The method of claim 2, wherein the multimedia data includes still images, and wherein the transcoding hints are selected from the group consisting of:

bitrate, resolution, frame size, color quantization, color pallette, color conversion, image to speech, Regions of Interest (ROI), and wavelet compression.

7.   The method of claim 2, wherein the multimedia data includes motion video, and wherein the transcoding hints are selected from the group consisting of:

frame rate, spatial resolution, temporal resolution, motion vector prediction, macroblock coding, and video mixing.

8.   The method of claim 1, wherein the conversion hints are stored along with the multimedia information prior to requesting the multimedia information.

9.   An apparatus comprising:

a multimedia storage element which stores multimedia information;

a converter element which receives multimedia information from the multimedia storage element; and

a client,

wherein the converter element converts multimedia information using conversion hints and delivers the converted multimedia information to the client.

10.   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the converter is a transcoder and the converter hints are transcoding hints.

11.   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the converter elements stores user preferences, and wherein the multimedia information is converted to a multimedia format in accordance with the user preferences using the conversion hints.

5   12.   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the converter element stores client capabilities, and wherein the multimedia information is converted to a multimedia format in accordance with the client capabilities using the conversion hints.

13.   The apparatus of claim 10, wherein the multimedia data includes

10   still images, and wherein the transcoding hints are selected from the group consisting of:

bitrate, resolution, frame size, color quantization, color pallette, color conversion, image to speech, Regions of Interest (ROI), and wavelet compression.

14.   The apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the multimedia data

15   includes motion video, and wherein the transcoding hints are selected from the group consisting of:

frame rate, spatial resolution, temporal resolution, motion vector prediction, macroblock coding, and video mixing.

15.   The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the conversion hints are stored

20   along with the multimedia information prior to requesting the multimedia information.

16.	The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the converter element stores network or link capabilities, and wherein the multimedia information is converted to a multimedia format in accordance with the network or link capabilities using the conversion hints.

5	17.	The apparatus of claim 9, wherein the multimedia storage element is included in another client.